

TRANSCRIPT OF RECORDING OF A MEETING
BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND CHARLES
COLSON ON JANUARY 8, 1973, FROM 4:05 to
5:34 P.M. IN THE EOB OFFICE.

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) Incidentally, uh, Haldeman was telling, uh, told me that that, uh, apparently that Hunt is going to, uh, (unintelligible) now--very definitely. I think it's the right thing for him to do, Chuck.

COLSON: Uh, he's doing it on my urging.

PRESIDENT: Well, I understand that Haldeman is after some kid they've got that--whether he was-- (unintelligible) that bugged Gary Hart?

COLSON: Yeah, that's true. Yeah, the one that bugged McGovern headquarters. Yeah, I suspect so.

PRESIDENT: But how could that be, for this reason: Watergate came before McGovern got off the ground and I didn't know why the hell we bugged McGovern.

COLSON: Well, remember that was after the California primary.

PRESIDENT: Watergate was?

COLSON: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: Oh.

COLSON: We knew, I mean, at that time (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Hmpff, Christ, I hope he didn't talk to (unintelligible).

COLSON: (Laughs) Well--

PRESIDENT: Well, suppose, I told Haldeman, I said, "Bob suppose, uh, suppose those in the, Congress does call him." He said, "He didn't do it." You know, nothing. That's the thing about all of this. We didn't get a God-damn thing from any of it that I can see.

COLSON: Well, frankly they did, of course, but then, ah what they mainly used ma--we knew.

PRESIDENT: (Pause) Well, don't let it get you down.

COLSON: Oh hell no...

PRESIDENT: I know it's tough for, uh, for all of you, Bob, John and the rest. We're just not gonna let it get us down. This is a battle, it's a fight, it's war and we just fight with a little, uh, you know, uh remember, uh, we'll cut them down one of these days. Don't you agree?

COLSON: I do. I, the only thing I hope is that the trial-- apparently Liddy is going to go to trial.

PRESIDENT: McCord?

COLSON: No. Not now. That's probably a good thing because the only one who's in a, is a very desperate...

PRESIDENT: Sensitive position is Hunt.

COLSON: ...and, uh, the others will just tell the truth and prove their case. But there is one advantage to it, there'll be a hell of a lot of stuff that'll come out...

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

COLSON: ...and there will be some counts that will not be, that will be dropped, I think, against Hunt at this point, and there will be appeals pending in the other cases. Now that (unintelligible) guts of the story (unintelligible) come out (unintelligible) makes it very, very--

PRESIDENT: As long as this trial is going on, the Congress will keep its God-damn cotton-pickin' hands off that trial--

COLSON: Well, it could be because obviously they will prejudice the defendants in this connection. You could get a, you could get a--it, it--a lot of this only comes up--Uh, this will delay the Congress getting to the point where they believe in immunizing witnesses. Uh, a question of prosecuting because of lack of rules of evidence and

(unintelligible) get into the specifics Uh, and the only question we have hanging (unintelligible) no Government reports, providing these guys (unintelligible) Ehrlichman.

PRESIDENT: Well, first of all, they're going to make the Government prove its case, but none of them are going to testify, isn't that correct?

COLSON: That's correct.

PRESIDENT: Are they?

SEVERAL VOICES: (Unintelligible) McCord.

COLSON: That's another subject McCord (unintelligible) hanging on to (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: (Unintelligible) appeal for all these guys.

COLSON: (Unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: But you know, Chuck, it's something they all under-took knowing the risks. Right? Whatta they think?

COLSON: I (unintelligible)

PRESIDENT: Did they think they'd get caught?

COLSON: No, I don't think that at all, I think they thought that, uh--well, practically, uh--

PRESIDENT: The Democratizes would drop it after the election? No?

COLSON: I think they figured that, that these were all guys who, uh, CIA

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

COLSON: And

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

COLSON: they all were taking orders from people like (unintelligible) acting on behalf of John Mitchell and others ...(Unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Mitchell would take care of them. (Unintelligible) How could he?

COLSON: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: No way.

COLSON: That's, that's what they were--Hunt's lawyer, he said he thought he, Hunt, objected to it violently. He said Liddy is kind of dumb. He said he didn't want any part of it. (Unintelligible) so we won't have two. But, he and Hunt recognize...

PRESIDENT: Well, I'm glad that you (unintelligible) them because basically I, uh, question of clemency... Hunt's is a simple case. I mean, uh, after all, the man's wife is dead, was killed; he's got one child that has...

COLSON: Brain damage from an automobile accident.

PRESIDENT: That's right.

COLSON: (Unintelligible) one of his kids.

PRESIDENT: We'll build, we'll build that son-of-a-bitch up like nobody's business. We'll have Buckley write a column and say, you know, that he, that he should have clemency, if you've given 18 years of service.

COLSON: (Unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: That's what we'll do.

COLSON: He served under Hunt in CIA, of course. (Unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: We'll (unintelligible) them after. That's, that's it. It's on the merits. I would have difficulty with some of the others.

COLSON: Oh, yeah.

PRESIDENT: You know what I mean.

COLSON: Well, the others aren't going to get the same Area`s... The vulnerabilities are difficult (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Are they?

COLSON: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: Why?

COLSON: Well because, uh, Hunt and Liddy did the work. The others didn't know any, direct information (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Uh, well, I think I agree.

COLSON: See, I don't give a damn if they spend five years in jail (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Oh, no.

COLSON: What I'm watching closely...

PRESIDENT: I think that application because...

COLSON: They can't hurt us. Hunt and Liddy: direct (unintelligible), meetings, discussions are very incriminating to us. More important that those.

PRESIDENT: Liddy is pretty tough.

COLSON: Yeah, he is, he is, apparently one of these guys who's a masochist, he, uh, he enjoys punishing himself. That's okay, as long as he remains stable. I mean, he's tough.

PRESIDENT: Yeah.

COLSON: He denied even (unintelligible).

PRESIDENT: Oh, my God'

COLSON: Yeah.

PRESIDENT: Jesus.

COLSON: They're both good healthy right-wing exuberants.

PRESIDENT: Well, this is the last damn fifty miles.
